

The Importance of Mentoring - Arranged by Mom Ann

Just a few years ago, people would have wondered what the fuss was all about. Up until recently, mentoring and the development of a person was a way of life between generations. It was to human relationships what breathing is to the body. Mentoring was assumed, common, expected and almost unnoticed.

In the past, mentoring happened everywhere. On the farm, families mentored children in the fields and through chore times. In the city, businesses and industry fostered their next generations. From the earliest years, these mentors taught the purpose and process of work; meaning and examples of character; and duties and obligations of each community member.

Contrasting the past, the limited supply of mentoring today prevents children from learning more from their families. Children part company with their parents for the better part of each day and accumulate an average of only eight to eleven minutes of parent/child conversation. Today, “people development” occurs more in a classroom, and an institution’s diploma certifies a person rather than the stamp of approval from an overseer or mentor.

Many are waking up to the lost values in our culture because the mentoring function has been permitted to lapse into semi-obsolescence. We see a renewal of reference to mentoring in the business literature, education world and social work.

Four major factors making mentoring vital for individuals today:

- * Mobility
- * Manhood
- * Models
- * Minority Status

* **Mobility** - - The mobility of our society makes for a widespread rootless feeling and disconnected relationships. Close family members frequently live many miles apart, and mentors are needed to fill-in for family.

* **Manhood** - - Mentoring provides the opportunity for manhood to emerge, to be discussed, defined and entered into with a level of confidence that would rarely be possible without the mentoring relationship.

* **Models** - - Students need healthy models of adult roles and relationships. Alvin Toffler, in his book Future Shock, said change occurs at such a rapid rate that all meaning begins to blur. Throughout change, mentoring provides consistency and the ability to relate not only to machinery and technology but also to people and life.

* **Minority Status** - - The smaller the targeted sample group, the more critical it is to nurture, mentor and increase the skills of leaders. If an organization has 60 members, it can lose a few leaders and never miss a beat. However, a team of 20 members cannot afford to lose a single leader without feeling it deeply.

Questions to consider...

1. Why has mentoring been so significant historically?
2. Why is mentoring even more important today?
3. Why will it be so important in the future?